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ABSTRACT

The phenomenal growth in enrollment at community and technical colleges during the past decade has had a distinct impact on the role that counselors must play to continue to provide a viable contribution to the colleges. Specifically, Mesa Community College (MCC), in Arizona, has identified three trends which provide opportunities for counseling faculty in the future: (1) an emphasis among educational leaders on total quality management, life-long learning, basic skills programming, academic excellence, diversity, and student recruitment and retention; (2) increased collaboration and cooperative with business and industry; and (3) curricular demands made by increasing numbers of special needs students with learning disabilities and mental disorders. MCC's counseling department uses a "center-cluster" counseling model, featuring six full-time counselors housed in a counseling building strategically located in the center of campus and an additional four full-time and three half-time counselors located at five academic division sites throughout the campus. The success of MCC's counseling department can be attributed largely to this center-cluster system which accents the availability of counselors and provides numerous professional services to the entire college community, such as instructor training sessions on the needs of students with attention deficit disorders and student seminars on math and test anxiety. (MAB)

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A COUNSELING MODEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY:

HOW TO SUSTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF COUNSELING PROFESSIONALS

A MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP MODEL

By

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Heidi-Christa Adams is a faculty member in the Mesa Community Counseling Department and Coordinator of the Peervention Program and has been actively involved with at-risk students during the past twenty years as a professional educator. She received her B.S. from the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and her M.S. from the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee and is a doctoral candidate. She is Mesa Community College's representative to the Arizona Higher Education Consortium for Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Prevention. Her work in the area of proactive prevention has been recognized by the League for Innovation as well as the Mesa Baseline Rotarians, and the American Legion. She is an Arizona Certified Professional Counselor and Arizona Certified Substance Abuse Counselor.

Anthony E. Chavez, M.C.
Tony Chavez is a counselor at Mesa Community College since 1971, Chavez has been the Assistant Director of Special Services, Counseling Department Chair, Multicultural Services Coordinator and advisor to the MECHA Club. He works with all students and provides personal counseling, educational planning, academic advising and registration, career exploration; and has extensively dealt with recruitment and retention of minorities, especially the Mexican-American prospective and continuing students; ESL enrollees and other at-risk collegians.

Janice Comer, M.A., M.D.C.
Janice Comer has over 20 years experience working in higher education which includes; management, counseling, and classroom instructor. Her professional expertise encompasses providing presentation to community groups, federal agencies and the Department Chair Academy Conference. Mrs. Comer is a textbook author and full time counselor at Mesa College providing counseling for personal, academic and career issues. She is the advisor to Phi Theta Kappa and serves as a member of the faculty senate. Her daily duties covers crisis counseling as needed and instructing counseling classes.

Karen Hardin, M.A.
Karen Hardin is an Arizona State Certified Professional Counselor with 11 years experience in the community college district including management and instruction. A doctoral candidate, she has completed training at the Career Development Institute at J.F.K. University. She is a certified administrator of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, served as the Director of the Career Planning and Placement Center prior to her counseling career and helped develop the Mesa Independent Learning Options (MILO) course for the Career Exploration course.

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Counseling faculty at Mesa Community College and a candidate for a Ph.D. in Higher Education. Ms. Kasapis has 25 years experience in the field of education and mental health. She has worked extensively with in-patient and out-patient treatment centers. Conducted stress management training, substance abuse, time management, team building and cross-cultural communications seminars on a national level. Ms. Kasapis teach stress management, male-female communications, and is a consultant and trainer for the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Federal Head Start Program.

Gene L. Parrish, Ph.D.
Gene Parrish is currently chairperson and faculty member of the Counseling Department at Mesa Community College. He has held several administrative positions including Director of Special Services, and Assistant Dean of Students at MCC since 1971. Dr. Parrish has worked and consulted in the corporate area as a manager and trainer nationwide with departments of Education, Transportation and Energy. He has also conducted seminars for the CIA, State, Regional and National Directors of Mental Health Agencies, and professional athletic teams such as the NFL Phoenix Cardinals, the Professional Baseball Leagues, Seattle Mariners and the Chicago Cubs. Dr. Parrish is an innovator and change agent with more than 24 years of successful experience in management, teaching, counseling and consultation.

I. **The Challenges**

Many community and technical colleges across the United States have experienced phenomenal growth in student enrollment during the past decade. With this increase, there has been a distinct evolution in terms of the changing role community college counselors may have to play if they are to remain viable faculty contributors in the coming years.

There appear to be three trends that we at Mesa Community College (MCC) believe are great opportunities of which the counseling faculty might want to take advantage:

A) Administration placing greater emphasis on total quality management, life long learning, basic skills programming, academic excellence, diversity, student recruitment and retention.

B) Education policy-makers becoming aware of the need to collaborate and keep pace with business and industry's ways of operating.

C) Increasing special needs student populations with learning disabilities and mental disorder

Opportunities with Educational Leaders. The profile of the "traditional full-time" community college student has drastically change due to the renewed emphasis on academic excellence, the new student influx, and a business/industry driven curriculum. When focusing on the actual dynamics of change, we as counseling faculty, working closely and collaboratively with the leaders of our educational institutions, can be primary agents of this change to meet the diverse and unique needs of our students.

Opportunities with Business Industry. As MCC increases collaboration and interaction with the business/industry community (e.g., Motorola, Intel, General Motors, etc.), we find that successful business leaders are incorporating many of the skills and knowledge that counselors already have in operation. We are experts in the psychological and interpersonal processes that affect all areas of life, including college and work. Effective communication, conflict resolution, stress reduction, educational leadership, and productive group facilitation , among others, are the areas we, as counselors, are trained in and foster in others. All of these issues could have a major impact on productivity, the bloodline of business. The most profitable companies in America appears to be the ten percent which pay close attention to psychological factors in the work place.

Increased Special Need Student Population. The strong decline in the U.S. economy which has brought about extensive downsizing in private business and industry has also been reflected in the reduction of, federal, state, and community health services. With the dwindling of a resource and the lack of health insurance coverage for many, more than ever, students are seeking assistance from community colleges and particularly counseling departments. The "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990" (ADA) (Pub. L. No. 1010-336) of students with disabilities in five areas, including educational services.

Disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Further, the definition of "impairment" includes learning disabilities, HIV, drug addiction, and alcoholism. Title III of the ADA extends nondiscrimination provisions to include colleges and universities and mandates accessibility of counseling support services for students with disabilities.

II. **Faculty and Business/Industry Collaboration in Meeting the Challenges.** In order to address these special challenges in a humanistic and economic manner, behaviors, attitudes, and skills in community colleges will need to improve if we are to parallel those of business and industry. The MCC Counseling Department believes that, if counseling faculty are to remain viable as professional players in higher institutions of learning, the following steps are necessary: (A.) The hiring of counselors must reflect student enrollment increases. (B.) Counselors must become more proactive as professionals. (C.) Counselors must do a better job of marketing themselves, their contributions, and their accomplishments. (D.) Counselors must increase collaborative efforts with academic instructors and approach challenges with innovative projects. (E.) Counselors must actively participate in campus politics and serve on campus committees, i.e.; Faculty Senate, Staffing, Budget, and Professional growth committees, etc. (F.) Counselors must assertively integrate technology into their delivery of service. (G.) Counselors must engage in grantsmanship and look to entrepreneured partnerships with universities, business and industry.

We, as service faculty, need to take an assertive role in this transition. Just as companies are now buying counseling services in the areas of conflict management, stress management, and leadership training, we need to work with classroom faculty and administrators in actively providing services in response to downsizing paradigm shifts. Counselors can meet these challenges by providing services in the following areas: classroom management, crisis intervention, personal counseling, academic counseling, employee support workshops, interpersonal skills seminar, prevention education, consultation in organizational effectiveness issues, and in-service training. The Mesa Community College Counseling Department offers time limited sessions for discrete problems as a way of introducing ourselves to our entire campus community. Our clients or "customers" include faculty, enrolled students, and often, community members who are potential students. For example, when we offer team assessment for students in the area of ADD (Attention Deficit Disorders), LD (Learning Disabilities) and emotional difficulties we play a vital role towards the development of new teaching strategies for this student population. Providing thorough assessments of students create strong bonds with instructional faculty, administrators, and community agencies, who recognize the need for this professional expertise in basic skills programming and student retention.

Mesa Community College relies on the Counseling Department staff to ensure compliance with the wide range of requirements that Title III of the ADA imposes on colleges and universities. The implication for colleges is that, by law, they are responsible for providing crisis and mental health counseling services for students with such disabilities. With the community college's "open- door policy" and no official "mental health policy," it is paramount that we provide counseling services which serve to support all students.

III. **The 3-C Model.** Definition: Structured with six full-time counselors housed within a counseling building strategically located in the center of campus, and four full-time, and three half-time counselors with offices located at five geographically positioned academic division sites throughout the MCC campus. This approach to the delivery of service to students, faculty, and administration is geared provide optimal access and effectiveness.

For example - Four counselors are involved in service learning projects which have been an integral part of the teaching and learning process, providing a natural interfacing between campus and the community agencies. One counselor serves on the Faculty Senate and as advisor to Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society. We also have counselors

collaborating on projects with the criminal justice department, student government, district professional growth committee and grant writing. Adjunct faculty assist in teaching, in service training, and particularly in grantsmanship and the development and implementation of new programs which provide important interconnectedness with community agencies (i.e., Mesa United Way, Mesa Public Schools, Empact, WOW, etc.).

Through the 3-C model, it is more convenient to provide a 3-4 session instructor training module in a given division which helps faculty learn the different needs of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to conduct in-service workshops for office professional staff on in office-employee conflict resolutions; and to facilitate campus seminars for students on math and test anxiety, and managing conflict with difficult people.

Two counselors recently teamed up with community mental health clinicians to facilitate student support groups based on eating disorder problems. Many students report this is the first time they have ever discussed their experiences with anyone. Some now see the need for additional counseling. One counselor provides "Peervention" volunteer training which trains students in addiction-related issues as well as leadership skills. Together the counselor and student volunteers collaborate with various other community agencies and business in organizing major substance abuse prevention events on campus and in the community. Other counselors offer counseling for adult children of alcoholics, incest survivors, and students suffering from depression. These time-limited sessions (brief-therapy 5-8 sessions) are highly effective and provide the necessary intervention which students need to concentrate on classroom learning and complete the educational and career goals originally set.

Most of these services do not vary greatly from that of many private practice "therapists" in the surrounding community. What is significant is that these services are available at no cost to registered students, faculty and college staff. Such services will help instructional faculty deal more effectively with the continuing mix of special needs students, and above all, assist students in achieving their educational and life goals.

IV. Summary

We must communicate to the campus community that we specialize in the prevention, intervention, and life problems. Counselors are significant contributors to student retention and the teaching and learning process, and when our work is better known to colleagues, more credence may well be given towards our struggle to remain as major players in the 21st century. The Mesa Community College Counseling Department's center-cluster counseling model enhances the educational mission of the college by delivering quality, professional services and expertise with a sensitivity to the political, economics, and legal issues affecting higher education in the 90's. The success of the Counseling Department can be attributed largely to this center-cluster system which accents the availability of counselors, and provides numerous professional services to the total college community.